

/159 cont. /

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Fig. 14. Prophecy Wood. One-half natural size
[as shown in the original text].



a, b, c, d, bits of wood of a set; d¹, side view of d; e e, holes for a string.

The prophecy wood consists of a set of four variously shaped bits of wood. These are thrown like our dice and the future can be predicted from their position, for example, whether hunting will be successful, or whether there will be a war.

An Auin maintained that from the prophecy wood he saw "an ox-wagon with two Whites approaching the settlement."

● [791] The wood appears to belong to a dwindling group of persons who, like the "doctors," are cleverer than most people.

N/OW

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The same informant gave more information about 'making cloud'. He said: ⁸²¹
'And, our gall, when we die, sits in the sky; it sits green in the sky, when we are ⁸²⁶
dead.' His mother told him, Dia/kwain continued, 'that it (thus) happens to us if we ⁷⁵
sit in the shade when the place is not particularly warm, when it is (only) moderately
warm, (and) we feel that the summer seems as if it would be hot. We think: "Allow
me to sit for a little in the shade under the bush; for the sun's eye is not a little hot;
I will sit a little while in the shade"; (then) we make clouds; our liver goes out from
the place where we are sitting in the shade, if the place is not hot. Therefore, we
make clouds on account of it. For, when it is really summer, then we (may) sit in
the shade.'

We do not know what connexion there may be between the concept of *n/ow* held
at present by the /Kung of Nyae Nyae and the /Gikwe myth of Pisiboro's hair making
the rain clouds, or the hair of the dead resembling clouds and becoming the dead
person's clouds, as Dia/kwain told Dr. Bleek, or a person's gall 'sitting green in the
sky', or a person making clouds because his liver goes out from the place where he is
sitting in the shade if the place is not hot. We hope someone else may be able to
throw more light on this. The /Kung of Nyae Nyae make so little point of teaching ⁸⁶⁹
old stories or lore to their children that much must be lost.

What the /Kung believe now, Demi told us, is that there is nothing about hair
itself which affects the weather. It is the *n/ow* of the person which the hair 'gives'.
As we understand it, some of the *n/ow* which is in a person is in the hair. When hair
is burned in the fire, the *n/ow* is released into the air in the smell.¹ It goes into the sky
and, Demi said, the rain 'fears' it. (*Kaa*, the word 'to fear', means to respect, to
avoid, as when something is taboo, and to be afraid of.) When a person's urine is
burned, it also carries the *n/ow* of the person into the sky.

/Kung informants told us that it would be possible to use the *n/ow* of persons to ⁷⁸⁹
control the weather, should there be need. If the big rains were unusually late and the ⁷⁹¹
people were suffering from the dryness, or if the rain storms were so frequent and ⁸²¹
heavy that the people had much trouble hunting and gathering veldkos, or if a storm
were especially frightening, they might try to start or stop the rain. A person known
with certainty to have a rain-bringing *n/ow*, because the weather at his birth had given
evidence of it, could be asked either to urinate in the fire or to burn some of his hair.
The smell of his urine or hair would go up into the sky and influence the rain to come.
A person with a cold-bringing *n/ow* could be asked to do the same to stop the rain, if
this were wanted.

We have no observations on who would instigate the burning of urine or hair to ⁸²¹
control the weather. We did not see it done. No one in a /Kung community is a ⁷⁹¹
specialist in rain-making, nor has anyone special authority in making a decision about ²³
the control of weather. The medicine men (*shamen*) have as their function the curing
of the people, not the control of weather. It would be in keeping with the practice
of the /Kung of this region, as we observed it in other connexions, for the group to ⁶²³
come to a consensus by talking the matter over informally as they sat by their fires, ⁸²¹
and then for the parents or someone else to bid a child urinate in the fire. It seems to ⁷⁸⁹
us unlikely that an individual would make the decision entirely alone, without speaking

¹ Ibid., p. 399.

² Cf. a myth about the Rain Bull, which refers to the smell of burning horns, p. 239.

775 hands of the corpse at burial is meant to conciliate his soul. Trenk
[764] says they believe only in an "evil spirit", which they fear, but he
[776] throws no light upon the nature of this spirit. He adds, however,
that, according to them, the souls of the dead fly about in the air
and also speak to people, yet remain unseen, except by children,
to whom they often show themselves in ghostlike animal forma
of oxen, horses, or gemsbok.¹

761 Of the tribes further north our information is somewhat more
precise. Kaufmann, as we have seen, maintains that the Auen
distinguish between those who die "good deaths" and those who
die "bad deaths", and he adds that the latter are feared also after
death. This distinction was not found by Miss Bleek among the
Naron at Sandfontein, but is also reported by Fourie of the partly-
disorganized Auen and Naron groups of the same district. He says
764 they believe in a "good being" named /*khutse* and a "bad being"
775 named *Gaua*. People who die a "good death" are said to go to
[776] /*khutse*, those dying a "bad death" to *Gaua*. The former have a
[776] good time and live in plenty; the latter, on the other hand, often
[761] suffer hunger and distress. A deceased person is believed to move
about in the form of a ghost at night. "*Buchu* is accordingly
sprinkled over the grave to make the spirit of the departed happy,
so that it may not return at night to molest others; further, water
is poured over or left at the grave in order that the spirit may not
interfere with the rain, and the bow, quiver, and arrows of the
deceased placed at the graveside to obviate the necessity of his ghost
returning to look for them." These usages are no doubt part of
[114] the funeral ceremony, but the context in which they are described
does not make this clear.²

775 The word *Gaua*, or, more correctly, //*gāūa* or //*gāuwa*, which
[192] Fourie interprets as a "bad being" or "Satan", is, according to
[776] Miss Bleek, also used by the Auen and Naron in the sense of a "person
[114] who has died". Her male informants said that all people who die
[791] become //*gāuwa*, and the magicians can see them. The women,
however, affirmed that only men who have been cut between the
eyebrows (at the puberty ceremonies) become //*gāuwa*, and only such
men can see them, though women sometimes hear them. "They
evidently mean ghosts," comments Miss Bleek, "and have much
the same vague fear of them as European peasants have. The ghosts

¹ "Buschleute der Namib," 168.² "Bushmen of S.W.A.," 104.

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[539]

O gallegan,
O gallegan,
Do ye not know me?
Ye do not seem to know my bus.

Then they speak to the Rain itself:—

Thou shouldst put thy tail between thy legs,
For the women are looking shocked at thee;
Thou shouldst put thy tail between thy legs for the children.

The Rain seems here to be thought of as a magic animal ridden by spirits."

- 791 Certain magicians have power over the Rain, and can cause it
821 to come or stay away, as they please. These powers remain with
them even after death, and just as in life they are asked for rain, so
when they are dead, they may also be entreated to send it. Other
magicians have a similar power over the wind, /kwe, and are protected
by it. The howling of the wind is believed to forebode evil; it
tells the beasts of prey where to find people, and when it blows strongly
they can approach the huts unheard. In the mythology the wind
[177] is represented as having formerly been a man, which now wears
the form of a bird.¹

- 773 Among the Bushmen of Basutoland and the Orange Free State we
776 meet again with tales about the Mantis, differing but slightly from
[184] those of the Cape. He seems, however, to have been here the object
[794] of a definite cult as well. According to Arbousset, it was believed
that 'Kaang (i.e. /kaggen) or, as he was also termed, 'Kue-'akeng-
[761] 'teng, "the man (master) of all things," causes life and death and gives
[821] or refuses rain. All the animals have special marks which he has put
[825] upon them; deficiency of game is attributed to him, and he is invoked
for success in the chase. He is also worshipped in times of famine
796 and before going to war, when the *mo'koma* or "dance of blood"
535 is performed all through the night. This dance Orpen's informant,
[773] Qing, described as follows: "Cagn (i.e. /kaggen)² gave us the song
of this dance, and told us to dance it, and people would die from it,
and he would give charms to raise them again. It is a circular dance
of men and women, following each other, and it is danced all night.
[786] Some fall down, some become as if mad and sick, blood runs from
the noses of others whose charms are weak, and they eat charm
medicine, in which is burnt snake powder.

¹ Bleek, *Bushman Texts*, 17; Lloyd, *Bushman Material Collected*, 9, 20-1; Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 195-9, 393-7 *et passim*; D. F. Bleek, *Bushman Folklore*, 307-9.

[104] ² In some orthographies, especially that used for the Zulu-Xosa languages, the symbol *c* represents the dental click, written / in the standard orthography for Bushman and Hottentot languages. Cagn is therefore merely another way of writing /kaggen; both represent the same sounds.

776 we have already seen, comes sometimes to the people while they are
 [797] dancing, and informs them where game is to be procured; while
 [224] if she breathes upon a man's arm this makes him shoot better.¹

From these accounts we may gather that the Mantis among the Basutoland Bushmen is regarded as the creator of all things, and is especially concerned with the sources of food supply, so that prayers are addressed to him for food, for success in hunting, etc. He is also linked up with certain dances in some way connected with initiation, although, from the description given by Orpen's informant, [756] it is probable that the "initiated" men referred to are the magicians, [791] who are also the physicians in all Bushman tribes. The tales recorded [773] by Orpen show that the Mantis here has much the same mythological character as among the Cape Bushmen. The latter, however, do [184] not pray to him, although by them also he is said to have creative powers and to have made certain game animals which are under his special protection.

Further north there are no particular beliefs about the Mantis. 184 Some Kung youths from near Lake Ngami, however, repeated to 776 Miss Lloyd several tales about /xwe, a little personage not identified with any animal, who plays tricks and transforms himself into a variety of things. /xwe also has some dealings with the Moon and the Hare, outstanding figures of Bushman lore. He seems to have much in common with the Mantis, but there is no further mention of him in the other branches of the Kung or in any of the other North-Western tribes.²

776 The Naron and Auen at Sandfontein spoke to Miss Bleek about Hishe or Hiyesha, a supernatural being who lived in the east, and [88] who, as we have already seen, appears in various guises at the boys' puberty ceremonies. He is regarded as the protector of the game and hunting; he once, when the trees and animals were people, bade them assume their present forms; he also instituted marriage and the mode of life of the Bushmen, Hottentots, and Europeans. [756] From a casual reference by Miss Bleek it further appears that the magicians "worked" with Hishe, but unfortunately she throws [114] no light at all upon the meaning of this statement.

From the Hottentots these people were beginning to borrow the idea of !khuba or !xuba (cf. Campbell's "Goba"). This is the 177
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¹ Campbell, *Second Journey into S. Africa*, ii, 32-3; Arbousset, *Relation d'un Voyage*, etc., 501, 505-6; Orpen, "Mythology of the Maluti Bushmen," *passim*.

² Bleek and Lloyd, *Bushman Folklore*, 404-13.

756 faculty of seeing and speaking to the //gauab, and only they know
 [787] and utter the real name, /nawa, of the chief of the latter. The evening
 [782] before a hunting expedition they pray to //gauab for help, and certain
 of them also have the power of conjuring down rain. This they
 756 achieve in the following manner. When rain is needed, all the
 789 people of the camp take part in a dance, during which they sing over
 and over again a mournful song lamenting the condition of hunger
 and thirst to which they are reduced. "Finally the great captain
 in the sky hears the lamentation. The magician goes outside the
 camp and sees that a thin cord is being let down from the sky. He
 climbs a certain way up this, but the great captain comes down to
 meet him half-way. As soon as the magician sees the great captain,
 he throws a powder up to him; whereupon the great captain lifts
 him up high and takes him into his house. There the magician prays
 to him: 'Lord, help us, the children are dying, we thirst and hunger.'
 [782] So long does he pray and plead that at last the captain says: 'It is
 [776] well, I shall send water, that the children may have water and veldkos.'
 [821] Then he again accompanies the magician half-way down the cord.
 As soon as the latter has reached the ground, he releases his hold
 upon the cord, which is at once drawn up again. The rain follows
 immediately."¹

184 Among the !O Kung in Angola there are also two kinds of magicians.
 756 The !num-k'au officiates at puberty dances, makes scarifications,
 • 791 sees spirits, and also conjures up //gaua, while the uho-k'au heals
 [881] the sick by singing, dancing, and extracting the evil from the patient's
 [787] body through sucking. For this he receives a present. Both
 [755] men and women apparently can become magicians of either kind,
 if taught by an older practitioner. There is said to be no ceremony
 of initiation for them, nor do they wear a special dress of any kind.²

It will be noticed that both terms which distinguish the two classes
 of magician among the Kung and the !O Kung are also found among
 the Naron and Auen for magicians. This would suggest that there
 is a similar division of functions in these tribes also, but neither
 Miss Bleek nor Kaufmann definitely states this.

773 The origin of magic among the Naron and Auen is said by Fourie
 [789] to be attributed to //gaua, and he gives the following myth in con-
 firmation.³ "The Bushman Tji-Tji is said to have been initiated

¹ Lebzelter, "Religiösen Vorstellungen usw.," 408-9; *idem*, "Bei den !Kuh-Buschleuten," 15.

² D. F. Bleek, "Buschmänner von Angola," 55; "Bushmen of Central Angola," 124.

³ "Bushmen of S.W.A.," 104.

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turned back with cattle and all to the BeChwana, by whom they were murdered with assegais."¹ A thoroughly convincing proof!

APPENDIX

COMPARATIVE NOTE ON BUSHMEN AND HOTTENTOT RELIGION

The analysis given above of Hottentot religious conceptions shows that in many respects they bear a striking resemblance to those of the Bushmen, although there are also considerable differences. Both peoples worship the Moon. The Southern Bushmen also have prayers to the sun and to various stars, which the Hottentots and most of the Northern Bushmen have not, but even here the worship of the Moon is far more developed than that of the other celestial bodies. This common feature is all the more significant since none of the Bantu peoples of South Africa pray to the Moon.

Neither Bushmen nor Hottentots, again, have any organized family or tribal ancestor worship, nor any form of religious practice in which the spirits of the dead are regularly invoked or propitiated, although among the Southern Bushmen as well as among the Hottentots dead people are occasionally prayed to. In the beliefs of both peoples the dead are in some way connected with the stars, but it is held above all that dead people become mischievous ghosts, which in particular are the cause of sickness and death. Both the Northern Bushmen and the Hottentots use some form of the word //gaua for these ghosts, although the Hottentots customarily speak of them as /hei /nun and by certain other names as well. Among both peoples, moreover, the magicians are somehow in special contact with the ghosts, and consequently have the power to cure the illness caused by them. Certain of the North-Western Bushmen, however, believe also that the soul of a dead person, as distinguished from his ghost, goes to live with the being *Huwe* in a house in the sky, while the Southern Bushmen likewise speak of an afterworld to which dead people go, without, however, associating this afterworld with any supernatural being. These beliefs are apparently not found at all among the Hottentots.

Both the Northern Bushmen and the Hottentots further use the word //Gaua as the name of a definitely personified being, closely connected with the ghosts of the dead. But here there is also a difference. The Hottentots regard //Gaunab primarily as an evil being,

¹ Op. cit., 122.